

Appendix A Iowa StormReady Population-Based Guidelines

Since the tax base typically dictates the resources applied to public programs, the guidelines for successful participation in the StormReady Program are based on population. Four population categories will be used for developing appropriate recognition guidelines related to weather disaster preparedness. The population-based categories are:

Guidelines	Population			
	< 2,500	2,500 - 14,999	15,000 - 40,000	> 40,000
Guideline 1: Communications				
Established 24 hr Warning Point (WP)	X*	X*	X	X
Established Emergency Operations Center		X*	X	X
Ability to relay real-time storm reports to forecast office	X	X	X	X
Guideline 2: NWS Information Reception				
Number of ways for EOC/WP to receive NWS warning, etc (If in range, one <i>must</i> be NWR)	3	4	4	4
Guideline 3: Hydrometeorological Monitoring				
Number of ways to monitor Hydrometeorological data.	1	2	3	4
Guideline 4: Local Warning Dissemination				
Number of ways for EOC/WP to disseminate warnings	1	2	3	4
NWR - tone alert receivers in public facilities	X	X	X	X
Guideline 5: Community Preparedness				
Number of annual weather safety talks	1	2	3	4
Spotters and dispatchers trained biennially	X	X	X	X
Host / co-host annual NWS spotter training				X
Guideline 6: Administrative				
Formal hazardous weather operations plan	X	X	X	X
Biennial visits by emergency manager to NWS office	X	X	X	X
Annual visits by NWS official to community	X	X	X	X

* If the population of a “community” is less than 15,000, they are required to have a 24 hour warning point and EOC only if the county seat is less than 40,000.

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Guideline 1: Communications & Coordination Center

The key to disaster management is effective communication. This is especially true in natural hazard emergencies (e.g. flood, wildfire, tsunami) where rapid changes may permit only short lead-time warnings that require an immediate, educated response.

1. 24-Hour Warning Point. To receive recognition under the StormReady Program, an applying agency will need to have a 24-hour warning point (WP) that can receive NWS information and provide local reports and advice. Typically, this might be a law enforcement or fire department dispatching point. For cities or towns without a local dispatching point, a county agency could act in that capacity for them. For county-wide applicants, the 24-hour warning point can, and should, act as the central communications reception and dissemination point for all incorporated communities within the county when the Emergency Operations Center is not activated.

The warning point will need to have:

- 24 hour operations.
- Warning reception capability.
- Warning dissemination capability.
- Ability and authority to activate local warning system(s).

2. Emergency Operations Center. Agencies serving jurisdictions larger than 2,500 people will need an emergency operations center (EOC). The EOC will need to be staffed during hazardous weather events and, when staffed, would assume the warning point's hazardous weather functions.

The following summarizes the weather-related roles of an EOC:

- May assume weather-related duties of warning point, when staffed.
- Activated based on predetermined guidelines related to NWS information and/or weather events.
- Staffed with emergency management director or designee.
- Warning reception capability. (See guideline 2)
- Ability and authority to activate local warning system(s). Must have capabilities equal to or better than the warning point.
- Ability to communicate with adjacent EOCs/Warning Points. If a county-wide applicant, must have communication capabilities (to and from) all incorporated communities within the county.
- Established communications link with NWS to relay real time weather information to support the warning decision making process.

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Guideline 2: National Weather Service Warning Reception

Warning points and EOCs each need multiple ways to receive NWS warnings. The StormReady Program guidelines for receiving NWS warnings in an EOC/WP require a combination of the following, based on population:

- NOAA Weather Radio receiver with tone alert. Specific Area Message Encoding is preferred. *Required for recognition only if within range of transmitter.*
- Emergency Management Weather Information Network (EMWIN) receiver: Satellite feed and/or VHF radio transmission of NWS products.
- Statewide law enforcement telecommunications: Automatic relay of NWS products on law enforcement systems.
- Amateur Radio transceiver: Potential communications directly to NWS office
- Pagers: From a provider not directly tied to a local system such as EMWIN.
- Television: Local network or cable TV.
- Local Radio (Emergency Alert System - LP1/LP2).
- National Warning System (NAWAS) drop: FEMA-controlled civil defense hotline.
- NOAA Weather Wire drop: Satellite downlink data feed from NWS
- Other: For example, active participation in a state-run warning network.

Guideline 3: Hydrometeorological Monitoring

While receipt of warnings is crucial to the success of any EOC or warning point, there should also be a means of monitoring weather information, especially radar data. To obtain StormReady recognition, each EOC/WP (based on population) should have some combination of the following recommended means of gathering ancillary weather information:

- Access to radar data (via LDAD, internet, local TV, etc.)
- Instruments to provide a measure of local conditions and/or hydrologic conditions (cannot be the sole means of hydrometeorological monitoring) i.e. wind equipment, river gages etc.
- Locally owned and operated weather radar.

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Guideline 4: Warning Dissemination

Once NWS warnings are received, or local information suggests an imminent weather threat, the goal of the local emergency officials should be to communicate with as much of the population as possible. Receiving StormReady recognition will be contingent upon having one or more of the following means (based on population) of ensuring timely warning dissemination to citizens:

- NWR receivers (Tone alert or SAME) in each government-owned building that is accessed by the public.

Required locations

24 hour warning point
Emergency Operations Center
City Hall
School Superintendent office

Recommended locations

Courthouses
Public Libraries
Hospitals
All schools
Fairgrounds
Parks and recreation area
Public utilities
Sports arenas
Dept's of Transportation

- Cable television audio/video overrides.
- Local Flood warning systems with no single point of failure.
- Other locally-controlled methods like a local broadcast system or sirens on emergency vehicles.
- Outdoor warning sirens.
- *Counties Only:* A County-wide communications network that ensures the flow of information between all cities and towns within its borders to and from the 24-hour WP or EOC. Documentation will need to be provided which establishes communications protocol during hazardous weather operations between each municipality and the the 24-hour WP/EOC. This documentation from each municipality must be signed by an appropriate city official (mayor, city council member, emergency management commission member, police chief). The county multi-hazard emergency operations plan documentation should also reference these established communication protocols with all incorporated municipalities within the county.

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Guideline 5: Community Preparedness

Public education is vital in preparing citizens to respond properly to weather threats. An educated public most likely will take steps to receive weather warnings, recognize potentially threatening weather situations, and act appropriately to those situations. Those seeking recognition in the StormReady Program will need to:

- Conduct or facilitate safety talks for schools, hospitals, nursing homes and industries (number of talks per year will be based on population). These may be a part of multi-hazard presentations affecting local communities/regions (e.g. flood, wildfire, tsunami)
- Accomplish weather-related safety campaigns which include publicity for NOAA Weather Radios where coverage exists. These may be a part of multi-hazard presentations affecting local communities/regions (e.g. flood, wildfire, tsunami)
- EOC/Warning point staff and storm spotters will need to attend NWS storm spotter training sessions at least every other year. All jurisdictions larger than 40,000 people will need to host/co-host a spotter training session every year.

Guideline 6: Administrative

No program can be successful without formal planning and pro-active administration. To be recognized in the StormReady Program:

Approved hazardous weather action plans will need to be in place. These plans will need to address, at a minimum, the following:

- Warning point procedures relating to natural hazards.
- EOC activation criteria and procedures if applicable
- Storm spotter activation criteria and reporting procedures if applicable.
- Storm spotter roster and training record if applicable.
- Criteria and procedures for activation of sirens, cable television override, and/or local systems activation in accordance with state Emergency Alert System (EAS) plans.
- Annual exercises relating to natural hazard.

To facilitate close working relationships, the community/county emergency management program leader will need to visit the supporting NWS office at least every other year. NWS officials will commit to visit accredited counties, cities, and towns annually to tour EOCs/Warning points and meet with key officials.